

BEYOND THE JOB TITLE:

The Case for a Future-Ready Talent Strategy

The health ecosystem is in perpetual motion. New care delivery models, the acceleration of AI-assisted clinical and administrative work, intensifying workforce pressures, and relentless pressure on margin — these forces are demanding something different from healthcare talent leaders.



THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Traditional approaches to workforce planning—built on job titles, org charts, and credentials—were never designed to operate at the current level of speed or complexity facing the industry. They assume stability where there is none. They rely on precedent when adaptability is required. And too often, they obscure the full potential of the very people organizations depend on most.

That's why forward-thinking health system executives, pharmaceutical leaders, and payer organizations are moving toward a fundamentally different approach, the Future-Ready Talent Strategy.

At TLD Group, we see this shift as one of the most consequential evolutions in how healthcare organizations build, develop, and deploy talent. It is not a program or a technology—it is a strategic discipline that enables organizations to align their most critical capabilities with their most pressing challenges, in real time.

Many organizations are investing in platforms and data to support skills-based workforce planning. But technology alone does not change how talent decisions get made. The real differentiator is how leaders interpret that data, assess capability, and make decisions in critical moments—hiring, succession, and deployment. This is where a leadership-driven, capability-based approach becomes essential.

“This isn’t about redefining roles—it’s about finally seeing your people clearly enough to unlock their full potential.”

TRACY DUBERMAN

Founder & President,
TLD Group

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WHAT IS A FUTURE-READY TALENT STRATEGY?

A Future-Ready Talent Strategy is how organizations make better decisions about who to hire, where to place people, and how to grow them—based on what individuals can actually do, not just the roles they have held.

Rather than defining talent through static titles or credentials, this approach begins with a clear understanding of the capabilities required to execute strategy—and then maps individuals to those needs based on demonstrated strengths, emerging potential, and adjacent capabilities they can develop.

AT ITS CORE, THIS APPROACH SHIFTS HOW ORGANIZATIONS THINK ABOUT TALENT:

- From roles to capabilities
- From hierarchy to contribution
- From career paths to capability expansion

For example, a clinical informatics leader may possess transformation and project leadership capabilities critical to enterprise-wide initiatives. Or, A policy affairs executive may bring the stakeholder navigation and influence required to lead complex payer-provider partnerships.

When organizations begin to see talent through this broader, more dynamic lens, new pathways emerge—ones that traditional structures often make invisible.

A Future-Ready Talent Strategy challenges three legacy assumptions that quietly limit organizational performance:

- 1. That a job title defines a person's capacity**
- 2. That the best candidate must have had the exact role before**
- 3. That development is about moving up a ladder rather than expanding contribution**

In today's healthcare environment, those assumptions no longer hold.

WHY DOES A FUTURE-READY TALENT STRATEGY MATTER **ACROSS THE HEALTH ECOSYSTEM?**

Healthcare isn't one industry — it's an ecosystem of interconnected sectors, each with its own workforce dynamics. A Future-Ready Talent Strategy doesn't look the same in a health system as it does in a pharmaceutical company or a regional payer. But the underlying need is consistent: organizations need to match capability to challenge at a speed their old systems cannot support.

HEALTH SYSTEMS & PROVIDERS Nursing shortages, physician burnout, and rapid consolidation demand the ability to redeploy clinical and administrative talent quickly. A Future-Driven Talent Strategy gives health systems a real-time picture of the capabilities they have — and the critical gaps they need to close.	PHARMACEUTICAL & LIFE SCIENCES As pipelines diversify and commercial models evolve, pharma organizations need leaders who can move across therapeutic areas, functions, and markets. Capabilities-based frameworks unlock internal mobility that title-based systems make nearly invisible.
PAYERS & MANAGED CARE With value-based care reshaping how health plans operate, payers need talent that can bridge clinical, actuarial, and member experience domains. A Future-Ready Talent Strategy helps to identify-and cultivate-these rare cross-functional capabilities.	POLICY & GOVERNMENT Rapid regulatory change demands leaders with advanced systems thinking, stakeholder engagement, and communication skills. A Future-Ready Talent Strategy helps public health and policy organizations build benches that go beyond technical expertise.

HOW DOES A FUTURE-READY TALENT STRATEGY **WORK IN PRACTICE?**

A Future-Ready Talent Strategy is not a technology purchase or a standalone initiative—it is a strategic discipline that shapes every major talent decision. The true power of a capability-driven approach is not just understanding talent—it is dynamically deploying it. Here's how the most effective health ecosystem organizations are putting it to work:

01

Define a Capability Architecture

Start by getting clear on what great actually looks like in your organization—what leaders need to be able to do, not just what their job descriptions say. This means defining the capabilities that matter most for your organization's strategy — both the technical and clinical competencies and the leadership and interpersonal ones — and creating a framework that can be used consistently across functions and levels.

For health systems, this often starts with leadership competencies tied to the organization's strategic priorities. For pharma clients, it may begin with mapping the commercial, medical, and cross-functional capabilities needed for launch.

02

Assess Capability Depth and Potential

Once you have a skills framework, you need to understand where your people sit within it — honestly and rigorously. TLD Group's assessment work is central to this stage. We use validated tools, structured conversations, and 360-degree feedback processes to surface not just what people have demonstrated, but what they're capable of developing.

This is particularly powerful in succession contexts, where surface-level assessments routinely miss high-potential leaders who haven't yet had the right exposure. Most organizations today have more data on skills than ever before. What they often lack is a consistent, rigorous way to interpret that data in high-stakes decisions. This is where structured assessment, informed judgment, and leadership dialogue become critical.

Embed Capabilities into Talent Decisions

This is where the shift becomes real. Instead of asking “Who has done this job before?” leaders begin asking “Who has the capability to do this well now?” The true payoff of a capability-driven talent approach comes from when capabilities data starts driving real decisions — not just informing them. This means integrating your capabilities architecture into succession planning, so you’re identifying successors based on demonstrated and developing capabilities rather than seniority or tenure. It means building internal talent marketplaces where people can be matched to projects, rotations, and roles based on their capabilities. And it means giving leaders the tools to have skills-forward development conversations with their teams.

IN PRACTICE

A health system recently reassessed a critical leadership hire using a capabilities lens. Rather than defaulting to a candidate who had previously held the same title, the team clarified the capabilities required for the role today—cross-functional influence, change leadership, and operational scale.

Based on that assessment, they chose not to move forward with the leading candidate. While difficult in the moment, the decision ultimately led to a stronger hire aligned to the organization’s evolving needs.

Develop Capabilities with Precision

This approach only creates value if it translates into targeted development and measurable growth. A Future-Ready Talent Strategy only creates value if it drives targeted development. Once you know where the critical capability gaps are — at the individual, team, and organizational level — you can design development experiences that actually move the needle. Our leadership academies, coaching engagements, and workshop programs are all designed around this principle: development should be anchored to specific, identified capabilities, not generic leadership content.

IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES THAT MATTER MOST

Start with your organization's 3–5 year strategy and work backward to the capabilities leadership will need to execute it. Don't start with a generic competency model — start with your strategy.

MAP YOUR CURRENT TALENT HONESTLY

Use rigorous assessment — not self-report or manager opinion alone — to build a credible picture of where capabilities reside and where the critical gaps are.

EMBED CAPABILITIES INTO TALENT PROCESSES

Succession reviews, hiring decisions, project staffing, and development planning all need to be speaking the same capabilities language for a capability-driven talent strategy to have real impact.

DEVELOP WITH PRECISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Targeted development experiences — coaching, academies, stretch assignments, peer cohorts — tied to specific capabilities gaps create measurable growth. Generic programs don't.



TLD Group **Perspective & Insights**

ASSESSMENT IS WHERE CAPABILITIES-BASED SYSTEMS SUCCEED OR FAIL

- Generic competency models **borrowed from outside healthcare** rarely capture what actually drives success in your specific context.
- Assessment needs to be **developmental, not just evaluative** — people need to see their capabilities profile as a growth map, not a performance judgment.
- Combining quantitative assessment data with **qualitative coaching conversations** surfaces the nuance that no instrument alone can capture.
- For physician leaders and clinical executives in particular, assessment must account for the **unique leadership challenges** of the health ecosystem — not simply apply frameworks built for other industries.

“A capabilities-based approach has helped us look beyond someone's current role and focus on what they can actually do. By evaluating leadership, judgment, and adaptability, we're making stronger decisions about who is best positioned to lead in our most critical roles.”

TOD WIESMAN

CHRO, University of Massachusetts Health System

TLD GROUP'S PERSPECTIVE:

WHAT WE SEE WORKING

Over two decades of working with providers, payers, pharmaceutical companies, and policymakers, we've developed a clear perspective on what separates capability-driven talent strategies that transform organizations from those that remain conceptual.

Leadership Ownership is Non-Negotiable.

The most effective Future-Ready Talent Strategy initiatives in health organizations are owned by the CEO and senior leadership team — not delegated entirely to human resources. When the C-suite treats capability-building as a strategic priority rather than an HR program, the culture shifts. Leaders start seeing talent development as their work, not something done on their behalf.

Context Drives Capability. The capabilities that drive success in a health system or a pharmaceutical commercial organization are not the same as those in a technology or financial services company. The political complexity of physician leadership, the regulatory overlay of managed care, the mission-driven culture of academic medicine — these aren't details. They're central to what "good" looks like. Frameworks and assessments that don't account for this routinely mislead well-intentioned organizations.

Data Must Drive Dialogue. Capabilities data, assessment results, and competency maps are starting points. The real work happens in developmental conversations between leaders and their teams, in succession discussions that move beyond comfortable consensus, and in coaching relationships that help people see themselves and their potential clearly. TLD Group's approach always combines structured data with the kind of human dialogue that turns insight into growth.

Equity Through Transparency. One of the most powerful and underappreciated benefits of capabilities-based talent management is its potential to reduce bias in talent decisions. When promotion and development opportunities are grounded in transparent capability criteria rather than subjective impressions or historical precedent, organizations create more equitable pathways for diverse talent to advance. In the health ecosystem, where the leadership pipeline often underrepresents the communities organizations serve, this isn't just an ethical imperative — it's a strategic one.

WHERE TO START: A PRACTICAL FIRST STEP

If your organization is early in this journey, start with a focused question rather than building a full system: What are the three to five leadership capabilities that will matter most to executing your strategy over the next three years — and how well do your top 50 leaders demonstrate them today?

That question, answered honestly with good data, typically surfaces enough clarity to prioritize where investment in development, hiring, and succession planning is most urgent. It also creates the shared language across your senior team that capability-driven talent management ultimately requires.

TLD Group partners with health ecosystem organizations at every stage of this work — from designing capabilities architectures and conducting executive assessments to building leadership academies and facilitating succession processes. We bring the healthcare context, the assessment rigor, and the development expertise that turn a Future-Ready Talent Strategy from a concept into a competitive advantage. This is how organizations begin to move from static talent structures to dynamic capability deployment.

“The organizations that will win the talent challenges of the next decade are building their capabilities today — not waiting for a crisis to force their hand.”

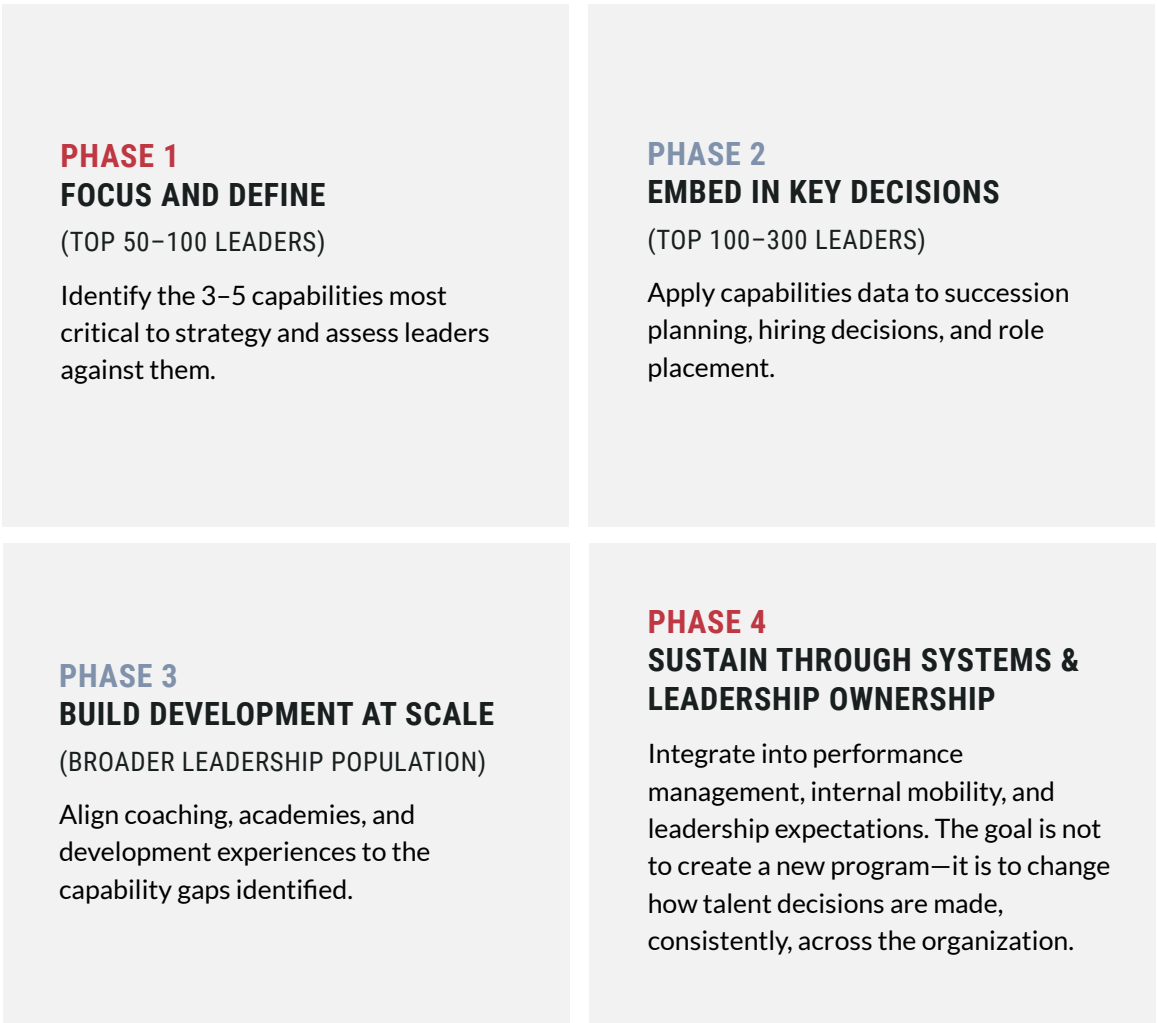
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Founder & President,
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WHAT IMPLEMENTATION LOOKS LIKE **AT SCALE**

In practice, organizations do not implement a Future-Ready Talent Strategy all at once. They start with a focused group and expand over time.

A typical approach:





Ready to Build a Future-Ready Talent Strategy?

TURN INSIGHTS INTO ACTION THROUGH
ASSESSMENT, DEPLOYMENT, AND TARGETED DEVELOPMENT

TLD Group partners with leading health systems, pharmaceutical companies, payers, and policymakers to design and implement talent management approaches built for the complexity of the health ecosystem.

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